

Lenten Devotional Reflection

15 March 2020 (Lent 3)

Scripture: John 4:3-30, 39-42 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

³ he left Judea and started back to Galilee. ⁴ But he had to go through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." ⁸ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." ¹¹ The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? ¹² Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" ¹³ Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." ¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." ¹⁷ The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" ¹⁹ The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. ²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must

worship is in Jerusalem.”²¹ Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.²³ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”²⁵ The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.”²⁶ Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

²⁷ Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?”²⁸ Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people,²⁹ “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”³⁰ They left the city and were on their way to him.

³⁹ Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.”⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days.⁴¹ And many more believed because of his word.⁴² They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world.”

Message

This passage describes humanity in a delicate way.

The Samaritan woman’s life was extremely broken and full of sufferings. Jesus pointed out her deepest concern and frustration in her life by saying

that “for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband.” We can imagine how pathetic her life was as she failed in love and marriage. She did not draw water when it was cooler in the early morning or at sunset like the other women. Instead, she chose to draw water from the Jacob’s well alone at noon. She avoided contacts with any people, nor did she want to relate with anyone, because she did not want to be mocked, humiliated or casted aside. Her soul was one filled with loneliness and agony.

However, when Jesus, who travelled from far away and exhausted, appeared, he broke three traditions. Jews and Samaritans did not interact with each other because of the endless conflicts historically and politically, Jewish men did not speak to women publicly and the gap between social status. So, when Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for water, the woman’s heart was touched. She started to know who Jesus was as she talked with him. She called Jesus by different names throughout the conversation, from “a Jew” to “Sir” (the Greek *kyrios* means “master” or “lord”), claimed Jesus as the Lord; then “prophet”, and finally “Messiah”, “Christ” and “saviour”. She understood and recognised Jesus’ identity gradually during their conversation. It was like our journey of knowing Jesus Christ. “Living water” refers to spiritual life, which is an endless source, and renewed the woman’s life so that she could walk on the bright and holy road with the hope of eternal life.

Samaritans believe that Jehovah, the creator of the world, is the only true god and Moses is their prophet. The Torah (five books of Moses) is their bible, Mount Gerizim is their holy worship centre and the Messiah will come at the end of the world. Jesus taught the Samaritan woman a very important religious lesson that God was not limited by geographical location and therefore the place of worship should not be limited to the

Jews' Jerusalem or the Samaritans' Mount Gerizim. He taught her that it was important for those who worship God in spirit and truth. When the Samaritan woman understood, she left her water jar behind and ran back to her community, became the witness of Jesus Christ and led people to Christ bravely.

Jesus moved people by going into the people. He broke the boundaries between nations races, sexes, social status and wealthiness etc. He concerned, took care, forgave and embraced people who were disadvantaged, hurt in body and mind, and even abandoned. Jesus leads people towards a true new and reconstructed life filled with hope!

Reflection

1. Recall how you came to believe in God, and how Jesus touched your heart?
2. Have you ever testified your experience in Christ?
3. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, we are unable to attend services of fellowships, will this affect our spiritual and worship life? Spend some solitary moments, and be truthful to yourself and Jesus Christ, have you had a different reflection?

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